

The EAGLE

For the employees of the Coatesville VA Medical Center ~ December 2008

A Message From the Director



Dear Fellow Employees:

This year many good things happened at CVAMC and we look forward with great anticipation to 2009. In January, we will release our 2008 Annual Report which will highlight some of our major accomplishments, a few of which I'll mention now. Our continuous efforts to exceed our patients' satisfaction expectations produced an overall outpatient satisfaction score that placed us at number six nationally. Also in 2008, for VA's important and highly monitored financial measures index, we were rated as number one in the nation. The behind-the-scenes functions of our financial and business integrity operations have a great deal to do with our reimbursements and resulting budget allocation from the Network.

We've also made great progress in continuing to address the needs of homeless veterans. The 60-bed, non-profit Fresh Start program opened in April and provides hope and direction to homeless veterans. We've implemented a HUD/VASH program which provides homeless veterans with assistance in securing and maintaining appropriate housing. We've also expanded dental services for homeless veterans. And finally, we've made tremendous strides in the Culture Change Initiative in our Community Living Center.

Without hard-working, dedicated employees, the level of care and support services we provide would not be possible. I thank you for your efforts in accomplishing all of our goals and objectives, and for the many other tasks you perform that may go unnoticed. As we enjoy the holiday season, I wish you and your family a festive and happy holiday and new year!

Gary W. Devansky
Director

Susan Duffy, QI Coordinator for Geriatrics & Extended Care Services



Susan Duffy comes to us from Freedom Village at Brandywine, a retirement community. Susan worked there for 10 years and held many positions, including director of nursing.

She graduated from University of Maryland with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing, but interestingly, she began her college education at St. Joseph College in Emmitsburg, MD – the same school that Susanne Palmer, Director,

Geriatrics and Extended Care Services, attended! Though they did not know each other, they were there for about a year together.

Susan studied pediatric nursing, but took a liking to working with elderly patients while she was still in school. She continued and has devoted most of her career to that niche of health care and she couldn't be happier. At CVAMC, she is most excited to continue the cultural transformations happening in our Community Living Center.

Susan has a husband and five children; the children range in age from 19 to 28, and she jokes that she celebrated her empty nest by getting a full-time job. Susan's oldest daughter, Kiera, is an opera singer who travels all over the world to perform. How exciting! Welcome, Susan!

Patient Transfer Office, and handling COS contracts. He is also our medical center's point of contact for compensation and pension benefits program for veterans.

Joe graduated from Philadelphia University in 2000 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. He went on to coordinate research studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his Master of Science degree in Education. Prior to his position at CVAMC, he was a quality management specialist for research at the Philadelphia VAMC.

Joe is most excited to focus on the systems redesign aspect of the job – essentially helping the medical center to provide the best patient care possible while improving efficiency. He's also looking forward to marrying Kristen Dougherty, in September of 2009. Congratulations and welcome!

Becky Stumer, QI Coordinator for Mental Health Services

Becky comes to us from the Department of Health in Montgomery County where she was a public health nurse. Before that, she was in drug safety at GlaxoSmithKline for five years; her focus was safety evaluation and risk management. For 11 years prior, she was a staff nurse at Grand View Hospital in Sellersville. In that position, she worked in inpatient psychology and medical detox.

Becky holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Penn State. She also has a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from Cedar Crest College and an associate degree in Nursing from Montgomery County Community College. So, she has been quite busy over the years, working at her jobs, raising her family, and also continuing her education.

Becky's father is a WWII veteran, so she is especially happy to be part of making health care better for veterans. Becky loves spending time with her husband and two children, Jennifer and Steven. She's an "outdoorsy" type who loves to work out, garden, and cook. Welcome, Becky!



Joe Galazin, Business Manager, Chief of Staff's Office

Joe Galazin began working at CVAMC in September. His position is new, and some of his main responsibilities include being CVAMC's Systems Redesign Coordinator, supervising the



Veterans Week Celebrations

Coatesville VAMC employees and volunteers

came together to execute another outstanding celebration for Veterans Week (November 5th-11th) this year. It started with the Women's Veterans Luncheon on Wednesday. Wilma L. Vaught, retired Brigadier General of the United States Air Force, delivered a very inspiring speech to the audience, explaining how much opportunity there is for women in the military, and the long road that took us to this point. We had some other special guests at this event as well, Mr. Michael Moreland, Network Director and Dr. David Macpherson, Chief Medical Officer, for our Network (VISN4).

Thursday, cosmetology students from the Center for Arts and Technology, licensed beauticians and employees volunteered to give some of our female veterans a "Day of Beauty". The ladies spent much of the day having their hair, nails and make-up perfected for the Veterans Banquet, which took place later that evening.

The banquet was a very special evening out for 200 veterans and 80 community members. Earl Johnson kicked things off as the Master of Ceremonies. Mr. Devansky welcomed all and thanked our veterans for their service and Don Means followed with a toast. Chaplain Dewane Stone said the blessing and 77 employee volunteers served prime rib, chicken cordon bleu, or fish with mixed vegetables and rice to all guests. Guests also enjoyed light jazz music while they dined.

Friday's parade, as always, was the highlight of the week! Parade Grand Marshal, Fred Mitchell, former Seaman 1st Class of the US Navy, and his wife, Lila, led the parade in a Pontiac Firebird convertible outfitted in red, white and blue stars and stripes. Coatesville Area High School's Marching Band and Cheerleaders put on a memorable performance featuring the Chief Red Raider. They were followed by many classic cars and a number of other community organizations and groups. The parade lasted about an hour and 15 minutes and was enjoyed by an estimated 900+ attendees and participants. It was followed by lunch for many and a special ceremony, calling all to reflect on the meaning of the flag.

Our week-long Celebration concluded on Veterans Day. The day began with the Coatesville Veterans Council's annual salute to veterans at Veterans Plaza in Coatesville. Mr. Devansky, along with many veterans receiving care here, attended the special tribute. The ceremony featured the laying of a wreath at the base of the Coatesville Veterans Council War Memorial. The day ended with an afternoon salute at the Great Hall. The celebration included picnic foods and karaoke.

As you can imagine, a lot of hard work went into making the week so special for our veterans. Jeff Fitzsimons, Diane Ranck and the entire Veterans Week Committee, along with many volunteers, worked very hard to pull off another successful celebration. Thanks to everyone involved!



Want to save energy and money?

Submit suggestions for reducing energy use at the medical center and you'll be entered in a drawing for one \$50 and two \$25 canteen gift certificates. Suggestions can be on any topic related to energy conservation. For example - facility improvements, procedures, practices, etc. Suggestions should identify a specific item where there is room for energy improvement, and also a practical solution to address it.

Saving energy not only saves money, but it is also necessary to preserve our environment for future generations. Submit your suggestions by December 12th, 2008. Full details and forms are available on our intranet site at <http://vaww.coatesville.va.gov>. Contact Corbin McNeill at x3515 with any questions.

Balloon Launch at Coatesville VAMC Commemorates 9/11



Symbol of Freedom



When CVAMC employees attended Congressman Pitts' Hope Summit in October, Lewis McCullough, program manager, EMS, struck up a conversation with the Congressman about the painting of the United States Capitol Building pictured above. It turns out that Congressman Pitts is an amateur painter. He had almost completed this particular painting on September 11th, 2001, when the terrorist attacks occurred. He was in Washington, DC that week and witnessed the plane crash into the Pentagon. It is believed that Flight 93, the plane that crashed in Shanksville, PA, was headed to the Capitol that day, and the flag was lowered to half-mast to reflect the sorrow of the nation. When Congressman Pitts returned home to Pennsylvania that weekend, he finished the painting, with the flag at half-mast and called it "Symbol of Freedom". After their conversation, Congressman Pitts delivered one of only 200 copies of this painting to Lewis, who donated it to the medical center. It will soon be hanging in the Director's Office.

Approximately 200 people from the Coatesville community, including veterans, VA employees, and community residents, gathered for a special observance to remember the tragic events of September 11th, 2001. The ceremony, which honored those who lost their lives, those who lost loved ones and those who fought and continue to fight in the Global War on Terror, began with the Pledge of Allegiance, led by two veteran patients. Next Mr. Devansky, addressed the crowd, followed by a prayer offered by Chaplain Pollitt. The event culminated with the launch of America One, a hot air balloon fashioned in the shape of an American flag. Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA" played as the balloon rose above CVAMC grounds, reaffirming everyone's pride in this great nation and gratitude for all of the sacrifices that veterans and civilians alike have made for the greater good.

Farewell, Chaplain Pollitt!

Chaplain Michael J. Pollitt, CVAMC Chief Chaplain for the last seven years, is moving on to become the Chief Chaplain of the VA Maryland Health System, where he will supervise 18 others. Chaplain Larry Evans will be taking over as Chief Chaplain and will be featured in the next issue of The EAGLE. While Chaplain Pollitt's selection for this new position is a great accomplishment and his successor is highly capable, his departure is bittersweet, as he has touched many, many lives.

Chaplain Pollitt will be remembered for his spirit of love, compassion and goodness. He is truly a kind, humble man of great character and even though he'll be missed, the positive effect he's made here will be felt for many years to come. We wish you all the best, Chaplain Pollitt!

How can you help?

Many of you work at CVAMC because you like to help people. If this is true for you, you should consider volunteering for the Disaster Emergency Medical Personnel System or DEMPS. DEMPS is a nationwide pool of VA employees who are willing to deploy as volunteers during a federal emergency. As a volunteer, you could be sent to areas of the country that are in the midst of a natural or man-made disaster. Clinical and non-clinical volunteers are needed. To get an application or more information, contact Diane Ranck at x4868 or Norman (Max) Reeder at x4215.

Safe Patient Handling News

From 2000 to 2007, between 12 and 16 percent of VHA staff injuries resulted from improper patient handling procedures. It is estimated that related costs are \$22 million annually.

In response, CVAMC's Quality Improvement Office will implement a safe patient movement and handling program to prevent improper practices. Nancy Moretz will lead this effort. More information will be forthcoming.

Fourth Annual Abilities Fair Most Successful Yet!

On October 22nd, 143 employees, along with a number of veterans and community members, attended the fourth annual Abilities Fair. The fair offered education, assistance and inspiration to people with disabilities and their families.

Lewis McCullough, EMS program manager, was the guest speaker. He spoke to the crowd about Team River Runner, a therapeutic kayak program for veterans suffering with physical or mental conditions. Many non-profit organizations, including United Disabilities Services and Career Link were on hand with information. The fair was organized by the Persons with Disabilities Committee and spearheaded by Terri Warden-Fioravanti, MDS Coordinator.

Happy News

Natasha and Matt Legas, Education Program Specialist, married on September 20th in New York. The happy couple honeymooned in Jamaica.

Ginny and Tom Hudson, HAS, became the proud grandparents of twin boys on September 26th. Ethan and Brandon Hudson weighed in at 6lbs 11oz each and are doing great. Mom, Dad, Pop-Pop and Mom-Mom are hanging in there!

Theodore Langford, CNA, married Rose Gazzo, RN, on October 11th at the Thorndale Inn. Pictures followed at Longwood Gardens.

Shawn Koonce, Medical Technician, married Colleen Wright, RN, on October 11th in Lake Tahoe, NV.

Shirley and Steve Blanchard, Director, FES, welcomed their first grandchild, Ashley Faith Lamb on November 26th. She weighed in at 6lbs 13oz. Congratulations to the proud grandparents!

Bonita Barbush, Program Support Assistant, and Nick Urban, Painter, were married on November 28th, 2008 in the Poconos.

Brian Dizel, son of Sandi and Steve Dizel, Staff Assistant to the Director, married Beth Mears on December 1st in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic. Their families and friends enjoyed a week-long vacation together in honor of the happy couple!

Sheena Crawley, Coatesville Area High School senior, daughter of Joseph and Joyce Crawley, HAS, recently placed 15th at the 2008 PIAA Cross Country Championship Meet in the 5000M. She received a bronze medal and is considering scholarship offers from several prestigious colleges.

FBI Special Agent, Jude Tarasca, and son of Mary Eill, was recently honored with the Attorney General's Award for Distinguished Service for his contributions to the investigation and trial of Vincent Basciano, acting boss of the Bonanno crime family. His conviction was the product of a lengthy investigation into the Bonanno family, which has resulted in the incarceration of every major leader of this violent criminal enterprise.

Culture Change

CORNER

Through an 18-month contract with The Institute for Caregiver Education, all VISN 4 medical centers will be receiving expert support for their cultural transformation process. Representatives from the institute will be working to provide education to medical center employees and to assist us along our culture change journey in our community living centers. Our consultant is scheduled to begin working with us in January.

*We extend our deepest sympathies to the family of Sandra Jones, Social Worker, on her passing. Our hearts are also with the family of Kindra M. Lewis, daughter of Douglas Lewis, transportation driver, and step-daughter of Krista Lewis, recreation therapist, on her passing.
May hope and peace be yours today and always.*

Accomplishments

Coatesville VAMC hosted the annual VISN 4 Equal Employment Opportunity Training conference on September 11th, 2008. The conference provided training for more than 150 EEO managers and collateral duty staff as well as select managers and supervisors within VISN 4. "Effectively Recruiting, Retaining and Managing a Diverse Workforce" was the theme and many dynamic speakers delivered invaluable insight on different facets of this topic to eager conference-goers throughout the day. Attendees rated the experience outstanding. Sandra F. Simmons and the EEO staff organized and conducted the conference.

Dr. Bruce Muchnick, Chief of Optometry, had the honor of presenting his lecture titled "The Eye in Atherosclerotic Disease" to the Bucks-Mont Optometric Society during a September gathering in Plymouth Meeting. Additionally, he was the keynote speaker at the North Carolina Optometric Association Annual Conference in Asheville, NC, in October.

Mary Haines, Administrative Assistant to the Director of G&EC Services, and Kathi Rendall, Education Technician for Education & Staff Development, graduated from the VISN 4 Facility LEAD (Leadership Effectiveness Accountability Development) Program in October. Applications for this year's program are being accepted through December 12th. Applications for LDI (Leadership Development Institute) are due December 19th. Contact Holly Ruckdeschel at x6102 for more information.

Creative Arts Festival

The culmination of the Creative Writing, Dance, Drama and Music Competition and the Fine Arts, Applied Arts and Crafts Competition will be the Art Show. The show will take place on February 18th from 1pm to 4pm in the Great Hall. For more information, contact Jenn Koehler at x5265.

Director's Holiday Social

Come celebrate the season at the 2008 Holiday Social. There will be music, delicious food, and door prizes. Also, the CFC grand prize drawing will take place as well as the awarding of the Supervisors and Employees of the Year! Stop by the Great Hall on Thursday, December 18th from 1pm to 3:30pm and join in the fun!

Keeping it Real Forum

The SCRATCH Team, which is made up of homeless domiciliary alumni, puts on the Keeping it Real Forum every couple of months. It is a mentoring program that links alumni, some of whom are now employees, with current residents to help them work through their addiction issues and show them that there is hope. The next forum will take place on Tuesday, December 30th from 7pm to 9pm in the Great Hall.

Mental Health Recovery Focus Groups

Veterans, family members, CVAMC staff, VSOs, mental health agencies and advocacy groups are invited to attend these forums. Discussion will focus on attitudes about recovery, information, support and resources. The following dates are planned for 2009: 1/21, 3/18, 5/20, 7/15, 9/16, and 11/18. All meetings take place from 2pm to 3pm in Building 5, Room 3. If you have any questions, please contact Audrey Hall at x2820.

Step into 2009!

Because we work on such a large campus, walking around quite a bit is inevitable. Fortunately, walking is great exercise. By taking part in the "Step into 2009" program put on by the Wellness Committee, you can track the steps you take each day to improve your health and well-being, and win great prizes.

As part of the program, you'll receive a pedometer and are asked to aim above 35,000 steps each week. If you do other things, like bicycling for example, you'll receive a conversion sheet so the activity will count toward your steps. The program begins on January 8th and runs through April 1st. Each week, all participants who have logged at least 35,000 steps will be entered in a drawing for one \$50 canteen gift certificate. At the end of the program, the three employees with the most cumulative steps will win cash prizes!

You can still sign up at the Director's Holiday Social on Thursday, December 18th, from 1pm to 3:30pm at the Great Hall. If you can't make it, please send an email through Outlook to Elaine Palla and Carolyn Grzenda with your name, phone extension and service. If you have any questions, please call Elaine Palla at x3762 or Carolyn Grzenda at x3751.

Wellness is defined as the condition of good physical and mental health, especially when maintained by proper diet and exercise. The overarching goal of the Wellness Committee here at CVAMC is to make it easier for employees to achieve wellness. As part of this, the committee has been working with area fitness facilities to negotiate discount rates for VA employees.

An arrangement with the Brandywine YMCA is still being determined and the committee will inform employees of the outcome. Fitness360, formerly Club Volant, located at 981 East Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown, offers VA employees a monthly membership fee of \$39 with a \$50 one-time initiation fee. The club offers child care for an additional \$10 per month, a wide variety of classes and towel service, among other things. All you have to do is bring your VA identification card to get the rate.

Calendar of Events

SERVICE AWARDS

Congratulations to the following employees who have been recognized for 20 or more years of service between October and December.

20 years:

Nicholas Babetski
Linda Erikson
Kevin Ferguson
Robin Handwerker
Iris Holmes
Timothy Kellon
Susan Rogers
Deborah Russell
Jacquelin Silcox
Edward Tracy

25 years:

James Brown
Jeffrey Drexel
Barbara Johnson
John Lavelle

30 years:

William Dorsey
Martha Hulihan
Jacqueline Johnson
Carol Mathis
Robert Schmidt

35 years:

Jane Falotico
Mary Florian
Jean Hunter
George Pearson
Robert Seiberling

Help Wanted!

Check out the all new Job Announcement Board specifically for CVAMC employees. You'll be able to view current CVAMC vacancies in their entirety, and access application forms. Visit <http://vaww.coatesville.va.gov>. Click on Human Resources on the left, go to Job Opportunities, and then click on Job Announcement Board.

The Eagle is published quarterly for the employees of the Coatesville VA Medical Center. Please address suggestions, comments, or story ideas to: Kathleen Pomorski X4203 or kathleen.pomorski@va.gov. The editor reserves the right to make changes and/or edits to any submission chosen for publication. Layout/design/photography completed by CVAMC Medical Media Department.

Good Bye & Good Luck to our Retirees

| Employee Name: | Years of Service: | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|----|
| Jeanne Varrassee Spangler | 35 | Patricia Hepburn | 24 |
| Jose Martinez | 32 | Joseph Hasieber | 17 |
| Debora Babich | 30 | Colonel Lewis | 17 |
| Carol Silveri | 30 | | |

Employee of the Month

| August: | September: | October: | November: |
|------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| Raymond Dennison | Leon Hamilton | Cherie Myers | Theresa Boykin |

Supervisor of the Month

| August: | September: | November: |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Robert H. Brown | Kenneth Whitehall | Rose Johnson |